

Essential Practice for **Building** Vocabulary for the TOEFL



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TOEFL* WORD Flash is adapted from TOEFL* Test Assistant: Vocabulary by Milada Broukal and published by Heinle & Heinle/ITP.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Broukal, Milada TOEFL word flash: the quick way to build vocabulary power / Milada Broukal. p. cm. Includes index. ISBN 0-7689-0626-1 1. Tost of English as a Foreign Language—Study guides. 2. English language— Textbooks for foreign speakers. 3. Vocabulary—Examinations—Study guides. I. Title. PE1128 87/148 1997 428.1'076—dc21 97-24011

Printed in Canada

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 03 02 01

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1. Read as much as you can

By reading as many magazines, fiction and non-fiction books, and journals as you can, you will encounter new words. You can guess the meanings of many of these words by their context—that is, you will get a clue to the meaning from the words that surround the new word. If you are still not sure, you can look up the word in a dictionary to check if you were right.

2. Use a dictionary

Buy a good dictionary, preferably a college-level dictionary. The dictionary should be all English, not a bilingual one. A good dictionary should include the following information about a word:

- its pronunciation
- its part of speech (noun, adjective, verb)
- a clear, simple definition
- an example of the word used in a sentence or phrase
- its origin (root, prefix)

You can also use a pocket dictionary if you travel back and forth to classes.

3. Learn roots, prefixes, and suffixes

Roots and prefixes from Latin and Greek make up many English words. It has been estimated that more than half of all English words come from Latin and Greek. Prefixes are added to the beginning of a root and suffixes are added to the end to modify the meaning of words. Learning these will help you increase your vocabulary.

4. Learn from listening

Listening to good programs on the radio and television as well as to people who speak English well is another way of improving your vocabulary. Since you cannot always ask the speaker to tell you what a particular word means, write down the words and look them up later.

5. Use a dictionary of synonyms and antonyms

Synonyms are words that have almost the same meaning; antonyms are words that have almost the opposite meaning. Knowing the synonyms and antonyms of a word will expand your vocabulary. Some dictionaries of synonyms and antonyms explain each synonym and how it differs in

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meaning for other synonyms. Since no two words have the exact same meaning, this is very useful for you.

6. Make your own word list

Get a notebook for your vocabulary study and use it to create your own word list. Whenever you read and come across a word you don't know, write it down in your notebook together with the sentence in which you found it. Try to work out the meaning of the word from its context. Then look the word up in a dictionary and write the definition in your notebook. Also, write down any other information such as the root of the word, and see how it is connected to the meaning. Lastly, write your own sentence using the word. Writing will help you remember the word and its meaning. Try to add a new word to your list every day.

7. Create your own theme groups

Words are easier to remember and learn when you group words with similar meanings under a theme. For example,



Then you can make another theme with the opposite.



8. Use your new words Using your new words whether it be in speaking or writing is an important

step in learning them.

EXERCISE 3

A. Look up the words for the types of sound given below. Put each under one of the headings.

roar rustle	rumble squeak	rattle bang	crack slam	hum murmur
Contin	uous Sound		Single Sou	nd

B. Add more sounds under each heading.

EXERCISE 4

Choose the sound that is louder.

- 1. a. hum b. rumble
- 2. a. rustle b. rattle
- 3. a. roar b. rumble

- 4. a. crack b. slam
- 5. a. murmur b. rumble
- 6. a. bang b. squeak

Adverbs of Time

sometimes	formerly	eventually
occasionally	previously	henceforth
frequently	prior to	simultaneously
meanwhile		

- 1. sometimes = not always, now and then. Example: We sometimes go to the movies on weekends.
- 2. occasionally = from time to time but not regularly or frequently. Example: I occasionally see a famous face at the opera.
- frequently = repeated many times, especially at short intervals. Example: I must be getting old; I frequently forget where I am.
- **4. formerly** = in earlier times. *Example:* The museum was formerly the house of the mayor.
- 5. previously = coming before (in time or order). Example: Had you previously taken the test before you came to the United States?
- 6. prior to = (formal adv. phrase) before. Example: No information was available prior to that date.
- eventually = at last, ultimately, after a long time.
 Example: He eventually passed his drivers test after taking it eight times.
- 8. henceforth = from this time forward. Example: The committee has decided that henceforth a special test will have to be taken by new students.
- 9. simultaneously = happening at the same time. Example: The two events that were of interest to me were being shown simultaneously on television.

10. meanwhile = at the same time.

Example: Some people are dying of hunger; meanwhile, others are throwing away food they don't eat.

- 5. I have to _____ that you know more than astrophysics than I do. a. concede
- b. recede

EXERCISE 3

6. The _____ for repairing the engine was very complicated. a. precedent b. procedure

Find two examples of words for each of the roots below. Then check your examples in a dictionary.

Root	Area of Meaning	Examples	
agr	land		
amb(u)l	walk		
anima	life, spirit		
anthro	man, mankind		
aster	star		
auto	self		
bene	well		
bibl	book		
bio	life		
brev	short		
capit	head		
carn	flesh		
ced, cess	go		
cide	kill		
civ	citizen		
chrome	color		
chron	time		
corp	body		
cosm	world, order		
cred	believe		
cycl	wheel, circle		
demo	people		
dic, dict	say, speak		
domin	master		

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3. to protrude = to stick out.

Example: The point of the arrow protruded from out of the back of the wounded man.

- 4. profound = (adj) deep; a person with a deep understanding and knowledge. Especially used for respect, fear, or silence. Example: Socrates had a profound knowledge and understanding of life.
- 5. to proclaim = to declare or say in public. Example: When the party spokesman proclaimed victory, the crowd cheered.
- 6. proficient = (adj) very skilled in a particular activity. Example: He is a very proficient administrator.
- 7. **prominent** = (adj) standing out as more important than others. *Example:* She is a prominent lawyer in this community.
- 8. profuse = (adj) in abundance or plenty. Example: The yellow mimosas were profuse along the mountain road.
- 9. prospective = (adj) used to describe a person who is going to do something.

Example: The prospective buyer of the house wanted to know every detail about it.

EXERCISE 1



Test on Suffixes

From the four underlined words or phrases A, B, C, or D, identify the <u>one</u> which is not correct.

Example

In recent years, chemical pollutants sucked up by the atmospheric fell A B Cback down to earth in forms of precipitation.

Choice (C) is the best answer. A noun, <u>atmosphere</u>, should be the object of the verb "sucked up."

- 1. Some fishes live at such <u>enormous</u> <u>depths</u> that they are almost <u>complete</u> <u>A</u> B <u>C</u>
- 2. The reduction of illiteracy is the primary education task in many parts of A B C D
- 3. One of the <u>majority</u> causes of <u>tides</u> is the <u>gravitational</u> <u>attraction</u> of the <u>A</u> <u>B</u> <u>C</u> <u>D</u> <u>D</u>
- 4. For the development of a coral reef, warmth, shallow, and clear sea A water without any silts or clays is needed.

5. Many species of lizards change their diets with mature and seasonal A B C changes in the availability of food.

- 6. James McNeill Whistler, considered as the greatest genius in the history of American art, was a versatility and industrious artist who was B C C proficient in several media.
- 7. Animals that live in cold climates often hibernate throughout the winter when food is scarcely. D